



Week of June 4 – June 10, 2008

## Fraternization: Don't cross the line

A few months ago, an Airman's Roll Call addressed Unprofessional Relationships. While most Airmen are familiar with the definition of unprofessional relationships, they may need further clarification about fraternization. Fraternization is actually a type of unprofessional relationship; one that can have major repercussions for Airmen both professionally and personally.

An unprofessional relationship can occur between two officers, two enlisted members, an officer and an enlisted member, a military member and a civilian employee, or a military member and a defense contractor. When the relationship creates either the reality or perception of a superior exercising favoritism, misusing his or her office, or abandoning organizational goals for personal interests, it is considered unprofessional.

Fraternization refers to an unprofessional relationship between an officer and enlisted member specifically. Here are a few points Airmen should know about fraternization:

- "Fraternization" refers to an offense under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, for which **officers** may be punished. It occurs if an officer interacts with an enlisted member on terms of military equality such that respect for the officer's professionalism, integrity and leadership is compromised.
- Fraternization need not include dating or sexual relations. It is any activity in which the parties—regardless of gender—are relating to each other on terms of military equality.
- Under AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships*, both officers and enlisted members involved in unprofessional relationships (to include fraternization) may be given an order to terminate the relationship and may receive adverse administrative action. Other actions may also be taken when appropriate.

Fraternization and unprofessional relationships adversely affect the morale and discipline of our force. Understand where the line is, and don't cross it. For more information, refer to AFI 36-2909 or contact your local legal office.

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

*Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.*